An
Inaugural Essay;

On
The Influence
of
Diet, Drefs and Amusements
upon health;

Passed March 5 1829

For the Degree of Doctor of Medicine

In the
University of Pennsylvania.

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Salisbury, Connecticut - School of N. York
Jan. 1829.

Essay

By

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The medical faculty are entrusted with the lives and health of their fellow creatures, and are responsible for the faithful discharge of duties devolving upon them as guardians of the public health. The object of the profession is to cure and prevent disease; and since this is the case, the attainment of so laudable an end ought in no wise to be defeated, by neglecting to censure the follies of gay and thoughtless youth, as well as to correct the errors of those of a more mature age. The influence of Physicians in society is more or less extensive, and should be exerted to the utmost in the promotion of health and happiness, by reforming errors, reproving folly, and discountenancing vice & immorality.

We shall proceed, without further preliminary remarks, to consider, in a cursory manner, the influence of Diet, Drugs and Amusements, upon the health of the present generation.

Diet.

No one cause of disease produces effects more injurious or extensive than unwholesome or improper diet. An article of food, if used without discretion may be productive of disease; whilst, taken properly, it may add strength and vigour to the constitution; or it may produce unpleasant or injurious effects in one person, whilst in another it may prove altogether innocuous, or rather wholesome & nourishing. These effects of diet, so apparent in different individuals, or in the same individual at different times, depend, in part, on idiosyncrasy, in part on the state of the system, but most of all, on the distorted and unnatural character of whatever is served up in the shape of food.

The intention of the Creator was, evidently, that man should derive his means of subsistence from the animal as well as vegetable king

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dom; this we infer from the structure of the human frame, which having direct proof of it in revelation. The more simple are the articles of nourishment, the more do they contribute to health, comfort, and longevity. In support of this proposition we have but to look back at the antediluvians, and contemplate the instances of extreme old age there to be met with. Society was then in a simple state; and refinement, with the Hydra-headed monster Luxury, had not yet made its appearance. When the wickedness of man became great upon the Earth, human life was shortened.+ Pris au déluge se rangent le décroissement de la vie humaine; le changement dans le boire, et une nouvelle nourriture substituée aux fruits de la terre. The mode of living among the Aborigines of our own country, goes, also, to show the salutary tendency of simplicity in diet— their meat being the flesh of

+ Bossuet- L'histoire universelle—

animals killed in the chase or fish taken from lakes and rivers, whilst the sole wish is the only beverage provided for man by the hand of Nature. Where do we find a people that can equal them in enduring hunger and thirst and heat or cold, fatigue in any undertaking? But mark the change in their physical as well as moral nature, on the introduction of the habits of the white man. Christianity, at the same time, will be its foreign influence among them.

To draw proofs from the table more nearly relative to our subject, expressive of the extent to which the Pilgrims of the ancient settlers of New England, Puritan and Dissenting in their habits of morality, and possessed of the strict and the most honest, and accomplished, foreign experience they enjoyed that health and even

gy both of body and mind, which their degenerate offspring, at the age, little dream of. Here we to seek for evidence still stronger we have but to bring the street scenes home, and contrast the two classes found among men alone; to put the rich and the poor. The rich are that set which may be chosen by a capricious appetite, or which they may exclude, while the poor are that which may be demanded by the time or which circumstances allow. The countenance of a person will at a mere glance indicate to which class he belongs as well as point out the signs of health and constitutional vigour that he enjoys. The indigent but temperate labourer has the glow of health upon his cheek, while the wealthy and luxurious has generally pleasing, but artificial pretenses of countenance or a complexion faded and sallow. It does not follow as a necessary consequence, that because a man is

ich he must be a glutton or wine-bibber but man is the creature of circumstance, and those who have it in their power give yield themselves up to the indulgence of even unusual appetite and passion.

"Dapes inemptæ et mutatis reponi pocula—"

"Nunc decet aut gravidum Cretæ dare cadum,

Eleonæ Cumarisve fundere nardum

Thaliarche, memento."

Such is the picture today of these two brothers, till some unexpected incident in the guise of fortune or misfortune changes their roles and plants in the more lengthened strains of sadness.

The fact is the two boys is different, and to me the reasons to which each be of suspicious. Many among the wealthy are accustomed to taking in no very small quantity, both of different kinds—liquids, liquids and agreeable liquids that the pleasures of the taste may be prolonged after

the demands of hunger are satisfied. The overloaded stomach now resists all in regulating its contents, and vomiting or purging, or both, are taken advantage of the best solvents of this congestive condition — or rather, adhering strictly most appropriate to the case — such delicate and complicated organs as are concerned in the process of digestion cannot long endure the unnatural task imposed on them, and the consequent of taxing and stimulating food which are so — frequent. As a consequence of the mode of chronic engorgement of some vital organ or a low degree of inflammation of some one tissue is sooner or later sure to ensue — hence a host of diseases well known in the college and enlightened age under the name of gout, dyspepsia, brokenness etc.

The diet of females unlike that of the other sex, consists in a great measure of pastry, sweetmeats and other articles of this class, than which nothing

ing taken into the stomach is more indigestible or less nutritive; and that it, moreover, frequently has the constitution be feeble and delicate. The ordinary life of most females, particularly those in comfortable circumstances, is peculiar to the sex; and the diet of which they make use tends to excite some of these complaints, and, while it increases the susceptibility of the system to others. Their drinks too are relaxing and debilitating and, unfortunately, their food, hot tea and coffee being their principal beverage. Thus instead of a rosy cheek and bounding life, among the sisterhood we find a countenance somewhat dull and wearing the paleness of the lily.

Every country and every clime have been ransacked for something that may please the vainly fastidious of our New Orleans. The daily and most common meals of

the great majority of people at that day are composed of the products of different [illegible] in the [illegible] any [illegible] but [illegible] original, both [illegible] [illegible]. The [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], or some [illegible] combination, that might gratify a fastidious appetite. [illegible] most dainty food, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] indigestion [illegible] [illegible] that bad blood Generally [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] bread [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in Egypt.

Dress

Another cause of frequent ill health in both sexes but more particularly in the female is to be found in dress. The tyrant fashion rules with such despotism at that day, that [illegible]

it then to be found a ready [illegible] to the dictates of nature and reason. The powers of Faith and sacrifice not only are [illegible] lost in the [illegible] of their [illegible] but even [illegible] [illegible] bear the impress of their [illegible] [illegible] Then the [illegible] flowing from that source, [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] up forth our [illegible] [illegible] be so [illegible] [illegible]. Then the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] new charm to her [illegible] grace in her [illegible] we are compelled to pity her weakness and lament the degeneracy of these latter times [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] to flourish [illegible] [illegible], the mother [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] the daughter according to the [illegible] are the [illegible].

The time has been when people wore that dress which best comported with convenience and comfort, and their becoming ornaments—

—— —— —— [illegible] have been forced.
To all the [illegible] of those [illegible] days,
And to all their newest [illegible]."

To fashion: so far as it is not incompatible with health or comfort it may be innocent to submit, but in truth there are [illegible] its sway over the [illegible] of many of our, the [illegible] most valued [illegible]. The youthful damsel is taught to wear her dress in such a manner as may best exhibit a graceful form, or display the [illegible] of her person. She early learns the duties of the [illegible] instead of being engaged in some healthful, [illegible] employment spends her time before

"the mirrour, where the [illegible] maid
Beholds and loves her own reflected shade.

Much, very much has been said and written upon the subject of tight lacing; but too much cannot be said till the evil of compressing the waist is done away with and it shall be as customary among ladies to go unbraced, as it now is for them to be laced to the extreme pain and peril of health.

Among our friends we find no medium between tight lacing, or compressing the waist, and the total letting loose of the waist in order to secure ease, comfort and elegance of form. The use of stays, when properly adjusted, is very proper and commendable. The less fashionable part of the female world are in the habit of using stays with a view to support the spines. Instead of a form delicate and slender, they exhibit the strength and vigour of masculine form. The body is made to resemble a barrel; and instead of a graceful and lady-like carriage, the use of health is sacrificed

ed on their cheeks and their coat is so the natural a person, not a scam.

By compressing the thoracic viscera [illegible] causing impeded respiration and the pulmonary [illegible] of the blood in the lungs in several chronic affections. The abdominal viscera also suffer. The portal circulation becomes sluggish and distended, congestions of the liver and organs of digestion, and a numerous train of diseases are the consequence.

Dress should be, not only as regards the question of meaning it must also be adapted to climate and [illegible]. The dress of the sexes is inadequate security against the cold or at all seasons, but especially in the winter and spring. It is surely a great error in education that young women should be taught [illegible] exposing [illegible] to the accidents of the climate, and to the extremes of heat and the more severe.

ear for by adherence to that system of simplicity & innocence [illegible] of [illegible] and [illegible] health are often disregarded. The [illegible] & long established principles of science and comfort are not taken into account — at least they are not as they ought to be considered of primary importance. If the truth be only reasonable now and then nothing further is required — the [illegible] of the [illegible] existing in the [illegible].

When we consider the two sexes the result will be that of the two the female are allowed to be the weaker and more delicate; therefore the health of woman should be more carefully watched over and the physical more effectually shielded from the causes that produce disease.

Nothing in this system of society is so detrimental to life and health as sudden atmos-

[illegible] mental requisites. And every change in the weather [illegible] allowed to [illegible] the [illegible] had influencing not guarding against its effects [illegible] paying [illegible] to keep our Lakes [illegible] not [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] that [illegible] too [illegible] their opinion [illegible] [illegible] hospital [illegible] reformation! [illegible] shall [illegible] [illegible] from that has been so [illegible] of fashion and Folly?

[illegible] and fatigue, and subject [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

and exhaustion and debility is rather [illegible] in maintaining the system in a high temperature. Thus [illegible] as the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], but in going from a warm [illegible] to a cold one or into the open air. Those leading a sedentary life are not much [illegible] [illegible] be such changes [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] out. The thin stockings and dress [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] particularly by the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] protect the lower system [illegible] against the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], while the [illegible] neck, and breast, are [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to a chilling atmosphere. Cough and consumption [illegible] will [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], while [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

[illegible] persons [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

real state of society ought to wear next the skin at least six or seven months in the year, in consequence of flannel or flannel between. Flannel is a good bad [illegible] at a few days and [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible], and make such a [illegible] [illegible].

Flannel, being a bad conductor of caloric, allows the heat to be [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] in the temperature next the surface that would occur without it. Some females in the delicate of their hearts or person [illegible] affectation of delicacy, may object to this mode of dress; but surely they will the [illegible] or [illegible], believe, to place upon their [illegible] health some of their [illegible] [illegible] cannot be too [illegible]. Every female who either [illegible] or [illegible] at the [illegible] of the year ought to wear [illegible] always, [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

bottom or [illegible]. A draft of that sort, reducing the whole surface of an equable temperature, promotes and contributes to maintain the perspiration so necessary to health and a vigorous [illegible].

Mental exercise.

Among the numerous causes that sap the foundation of a healthy constitution and induce disease and premature decay, are the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] among the [illegible] of both sexes. Some of these operate directly on the body producing functional derangement of some vital organ, or their effect may be produced indirectly upon the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] of the mind. The reciprocal influence between the mind and body is such that the disease which may have been commenced in either will render its effects upon the

system, and its physicians.

Of all amusements that prove inimical to health, dancing will be the first to claim our attention, inasmuch as its influence is the most extensive. If Rest when inclined to moderation, would be an approach nearer to all as healthful as it is; but such is not the case — every thing in this country is managed and managed, and so all. The day does not afford time enough to enjoy this fascinating recreation, but to some strange phantasy of fashion, models the manner of nature has been in a great measure reversed. That portion of time designed for the Author for refreshment and sleep, is devoted to dissipation, excess and fatigue, dancing with the world, is a specimen of innocent amusement. At the proper unseasonable hours, there are other evils attendant

[illegible] at the least of [illegible]
The principal [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible]. Sometimes [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible], [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] party; for the strength of their [illegible] to
the almost [illegible] persons are unable to [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] of both characters [illegible]
[illegible] are generally corrupted; when as soon
as they become [illegible] such to [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
the [illegible] [illegible]. That per a [illegible] time,
[illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]; but re-
course must soon be had to the same rem-
edy, the common fountain of health and
vigour. At length prior, [illegible] [illegible]
and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] exhaustion.

In these occasions too, the drug must be
light that it may not [illegible] motion, [illegible]
also that it may the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

ful form. The wearer of that dress dances till perspiration breaks out profusely, then at some unknown moment the refreshing breeze. The effects consequent upon the exposure of a delicate body to a current of air when in a state of perspiration are to be dreaded at any time; but much more so when a delicate female, after severe exercise to which she is a stranger and thereby clog, that fleeting health and life are jeopardized. If none but the robust and vigorous were to engage in that pastime, the consequences would be less serious; but the fragile and delicate constitutions of most of our females cannot endure that exercise with impunity; and we have to lament that many of the finest specimens of female loveliness have victims to that popular and agreeable recreation.

Were dancing confined exclusively to the young our strictures would require to be

less positive but

"Dames of ancient days
Have led their children thro' the mirthful maze;
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore
Has frisk'd beneath the burden of threescore."

The effects on the mind of some circumstances attending dancing, though not so conspicuous at first, never fail to become manifest in due time. The febrile excitement during the stage of preparation for a dancing party, produced by an absorbing and passionate desire of making a brilliant display, is [illegible] calculated to pr[illegible] the system in such a ma[illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. During that single hour, the spirit is [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] females are [illegible] devoted to the eager

[illegible] of their time in the art of clothing and making captives and consequently injuring the apparatus by. When the merits of so many are concerned in accomplishing the same object, of course, must meet with disappointment — then entire privacy may and all the rational pastime that a man can enjoy, all of which contribute, in a greater or less degree, directly to the [illegible] of health.

"What wonders are done in town, and in man
Perhaps and it is not in the compass of man!
The town hath strength to kill or else
Those near relations of the heaven's skies!
That wheel of lofts that saunter of the town,
Call it diversion and the pell-mell fashion;
Fools grow on fools, and sense like sickness
Without any sigh the pleasures of a court."

Theatres. The frequent attendance upon theatres, proves not only inclination to the

constitution, but is also destructive to virtue and morality — two ingredients that represent character estimable, as they form the check dollars that support our Republican government. As with dancing so with attending Theatres, there are circumstances which operate as causes in producing a strong aversion which may be, shows the late hour at which theatre going people seek to keep their senses in forgetfulness. The most entertaining & rational performance produces such a feeble excitement or mental sensation as generally to forbid any approach to the throne of God; thus the night is passed in restlessness and disquiet. But if perchance one in this condition do happen to fall into a slumber his sleep is short and unrefreshing, very often interrupted by scenes of the most unpleasant and disagreeable nature. This may be

[illegible] by the friends of Freedom, but the sym-
[illegible] and tears [illegible] expressed in their free
[illegible] condemnation. [illegible] of [illegible] show
that the moral tranquillity of their minds
has been disturbed and that they have not
received the sweetness and [illegible] of Divine Nature's
sweet restorer.

The contaminated atmosphere of a crowd-
ed Theatre is another cause that greatly
injurious on the health. That part of the air
necessary to perform the function of respiration
becomes consumed or deteriorated; and in
lieu of it there is received a gas inspirable
and deleterious. Added to that, there is the mor-
bid effluvia from the lungs of a multi-
tude in almost every stage and shape of dis-
ease. What say [illegible] is the slightest pulse
[illegible] to refreshment and [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible], with a grog-buster and nickeling

bad breath? or with a tobacco chewer, or smoker, or one whose mouth is filled with decayed teeth or one whose breath is foul [illegible] with a loathsome disease. In a proportion one not fail to shock the sensibility of almost any one of the gentler sex. Yet every lady who attends a theatre has all this, and even more. Not only is the air in the room of a play is so contaminated by exhalations from the lungs but also it every person, under the circumstances we are considering, perspires, more or less freely. Thus by investing the real nature, as it exists, exchanging that heated apartment for the open air after all, considered, fatally to health. If the room be not too warm, it is often uncomfortably cold the effects in this case are equally bad.

The mind is operated upon in various ways sometimes the spectator is overwhelmed with

grief and again dried with joy. The effect of the weeping represent is always injurious while that of the opposite class [illegible] be different.

"Tragedies excite [illegible] pathos in the minds of spectators but do not excite to virtuous actions. The mind when thus excited recoils upon itself, from its feeling having no vent in virtuous actions. The feelings of some people who are accustomed to restrain them, frequently prompts them to action. Tragedies do not excite virtuously, as it arises from the [illegible] of [illegible] who [illegible] them most. A lady who will sob for hours over the Hero or Heroine of a Tragedy, will often deny her servants even the comforts of life and will listen unmoved to a half Starved family who have been ruined by famine or war. The restrictions on Tragedies are carried to much above what occurs in real life, that

the sympathy of the spectator becomes incapable of being excited by real distress."

It is not our purpose in this place to speak of the evils done to society by the tendency Theatres have to corrupt the morals & impair the taste of the age.

Sedentary Amusements, notwithstanding the many warm friends they may have both among the male and female sex yet except mental & health and happiness, & the spirit of amusement and playing interest the first, notice inasmuch as it has charms superior to all other games of the kind and a more bewitching influence over the youthful mind. We care not for any argument that may be urged in favour of its innocence since proof enough can be adduced to show the hideous evil resulting from card playing.

by a negligence and a perfect disregard for the glorious that appears to be dearer to health and life, loss of sleep is neglected, ingestion is imperfectly performed the appetite cannot be spared, and the hours that nature has allotted for sleep are spent around the gaming-table in unhallowed amusements. (and playing is carried thus far by way of amusement, but here the evil does not stop: cards are often used for the purpose of gambling and then the effects are much more lamentable. The mental exhilaration and want of real repose of one night is followed by febrile excitement the succeeding day; thus the mind acts upon the body, which in its turn is acted upon, reciprocal influence between the mind and the body thus hardened and kept up, often terminates in mental alienation,

or more complete mania. In this state, the unhappy gambler may linger out a worthless existence amid the gloom of despair, or the sufferer may terminate his sad condition by committing the rash act of suicide.
Tho' card-playing does not always lead to this unhappy issue, yet when practised only as an amusement a great degree of firmness and resolution is required to withstand its charms.
The system requires regularity in habits of exercise, diet, sleep etc, but a regard for all these salutary habits is sacrificed to the pleasures of whist.
Novel-reading should not be passed over in silence; but the above remarks are more or less applicable in this case, as well as to all other amusements of a sedentary nature; and of course need not a repetition.

C. Tickenor. 16 M. Eighth.